

RACE BIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF SOME PROBLEMS OF POPULATION.

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Everywhere among civilized nations, various problems of population are coming to the fore. Politics will in the near future actively concern itself with these problems. Governments can in the long run not pass them by. The enormous industrialization of certain countries, as well as the throwing open of large new areas of land, rich in natural resources, have greatly contributed to a considerable increase of population, and have caused migration en masse. For many years, immigration and emigration remained fairly unhampered by laws and regulations, but that time has now almost passed. This fact occasions much friction and great difficulties. Dr. Helmer Key's book, "The New Colonial Policy," which has appeared in several languages, is an excellent guide in this question.

Another population problem which deserves the very greatest attention concerns the fact that the nativity rate is sinking rapidly in practically all civilized countries, although with varying speed. France for a long time had the lowest nativity rate that was known to exist anywhere in the world. The limitation of offspring is at present, however, so great in Sweden, that our country now has a nativity rate lower than even that of France. Only 16 children are born to every 1000 inhabitants yearly. A hundred years ago the figure was 34, at the beginning of the present century, it was 27. The decrease in nativity begins in the more valuable and responsible strata of society. This in its turn leads to disastrous changes in the structure of the nation. If all individuals were essentially alike (in genotype), as was the earlier view—it is still the view held by the majority—the fact that the nativity rate is high in one stratum and low in another, high in one people and low in another, would not matter so much, as progress and the favourable development of humanity would then be entirely a matter of external improvement, moral and mental education, etc. But though recognizing all the beneficent effects of such factors on the individual and on the living population, we must strongly emphasize the fact brought out by heredity research, that individuals and peoples are not alike, and that inheritance (qualities of family and race) follows laws quite distinct from those which apply to the individual human being.

At conventions and meetings of different kinds, in our country as well as abroad, questions relating to migration, density of population and nativity are being ardently discussed. These questions are decidedly very complicated and difficult to solve, in their relations to the individual and the family as well as the nation. They must be attacked in conjunction, and with international co-operation. There may be differences of opinion as to the methods and means, but a golden rule respected by all should be that the *quality of the different peoples must be maintained, cost what it may*. The eugenical view-point must be given due regard, as we cannot afford to throw away the extremely valuable asset of good human stock. Many political economists and statisticians, here and abroad, no doubt judge these matters very superficially. They count human beings as mathematical units, and they believe, even though they have no sufficient knowledge of biological laws, that they can judge far in advance, the approximate number of individuals which a certain country may be able to feed in the future. Often they give evidence of an amazing degree of pessimism. It is an unfortunate circumstance that the professors of new and undeveloped sciences—the biological sciences as well as the humanities—are often guilty of exaggeration and immaturity of judgment.

Our own small nation, which a thousand years ago constituted only a small percentage of what the population is at present, has steadily increased. Great numbers of our people have emigrated to many different countries in Europe and other parts of the world, everywhere contributing to raise the native culture. The good racial qualities which we have inherited through the generosity of Nature, have nowhere failed to evidence themselves. The Swede, as well as the member of the other Scandinavian nations, is everywhere a welcome stranger. He becomes the pioneer, and as a rule, lays the foundation of a solid, organized state. There are many peoples with a weaker heritage who have not been capable of this. Perhaps on the whole it is always so that genotypically well-equipped peoples spread out and distribute their culture. Inferior races and peoples die out and leave place for others. I do not of course advocate that the stronger peoples shall encroach upon the others and exterminate them by force of arms. Such imperialism one must disapprove of, but on the other hand, robust nations should not constantly be complaining to all the world that they have not enough room and must decrease their number. Such an attitude indicates faint-heartedness, it encourages pessimism and inspires no confidence. In this connection the words of a great Swede may be quoted. The Swedish historian, Erik Gustaf Geijer, once said that a tendency of the population to expand beyond the feeding possibilities of its own production is the explanation of and the incentive for bringing the soil under cultivation, and for progressing in general culture, for man requires want as a teacher. It is only stating a half truth when we say that the inventions and technical improvements of modern times have alone made possible a greatly increased population on the earth. The other half of the truth is this, that an increased density of population has forced into being new ideas and improvements of all kinds. As the old adage has it: "necessity is the mother of invention." Sooner or later, however, the population

of the earth will come to a point where it will remain fairly constant; after all, trees do not grow up into heaven.

One of the foremost political necessities of the future will then be to improve human stock by sensible measures and wise laws. This will not be possible, I am afraid, without a thorough knowledge of biological laws.

Many a person, now living, will consider that these are empty speculations and Utopian dreams, but that is not so. The history of culture shows us many instances of what has been considered impossible one century being accomplished the next, or even before then.

To make the foregoing still clearer, I shall use an illustration. Imagine an energetic and prudent gardener who has to live on the produce of his garden. The foremost requirements for a good economic result are favourable external circumstances, i.e., good soil, plenty of water, a protected location with southern exposure, etc. Every spring he has to work on the soil, so that he may do his sowing. He must know how to make a careful choice of plants and seeds, as the prospective proceeds will largely depend on this selection. When he has everything planted, he must not neglect to water it; in addition he must weed over and over again, as the weeds grow faster and more abundantly than the cultivated plants. This whole program must be repeated year after year. If the cultivator becomes lazy and careless, the garden will run wild.

If we apply this illustration to civilization, which is the human garden, we find that it is much neglected and has many imperfections.

Those who are in charge of the human garden, and its individuals, families and peoples, are as a rule not competent. They devote very much energy to improving the soil, to obtaining sunshine, light, air, sufficient nourishment, education, enlightenment, etc., but this is generally the end of their aims. The selection of noble strains for cultivation, and the weeding out of the less valuable, are practically entirely neglected. The result is a progressive running wild, which, if left to itself, will lead to the deterioration, degeneration and even extermination of the civilized nations. Such happenings are recorded on many pages in history.

The danger can not be averted by a splendid milieu and high external culture. These factors may even accelerate the deterioration or degeneration, if steps are not simultaneously taken for a really effective, wise upbuilding of the population, and prevention of the propagation of undesirables (by sterilization, segregation in custodial institutions, etc.). Human beings are, after all, subject to the laws of heredity, and we cannot ignore these without being crushed by them. Eugenically good human stock is an absolute necessity for the attainment of genuine, lasting culture. The best imaginable surroundings and the most excellent education of the present generation can alone not produce a first-rate body of people. To attain this end, more profound care is needed, an efficacious support of good homes, raising of the nativity rates in eugenically favourable strata, independent of the social stratum to which the individual belongs, and finally, diminishing the fertility of the unfit, in short, eugenical measures of various kinds. The aim of race biology is to throw light on all these conditions, and

to point out the direction in which we must strive. For the nations themselves and their statesmen remains the work of effectively putting into practice what will benefit posterity and humanity as a whole.

May we then in all countries work to solve these questions without much selfishness and without fanaticism. We must try to work out relations among the various peoples and among the individuals in the nation in the best possible manner. It is indeed no easy matter, but we should all learn to realize the vital importance of these questions and as much as we can, to work for the prevention of bloodshed and devastating wars, which do not improve the world.